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A Life

by Winnie McCroy
EDGE Editor
Monday Oct 24, 2016



Brad Heberlee & David Hyde Pierce

Obie Award winner Adam Bock presents the world premiere of the poignant new drama, "A Life," starring Tony- and Emmy-Award winner David Hyde Pierce. The play is the second production this season for Playwrights Horizon, at the Peter Jay Sharp Theater on 42nd Street in New York City.

The play is mostly a two-hander, comprised of Pierce as single gay man Nate Martin, and his friend Curtis, played by Brad Heberlee. Marinda Anderson, Nedra McClyde, and Lynne McCollough play bit parts as well, and all do very well.

But the bulk of the action, such as it is, centers on Nate, a hopelessly single gay man dealing with the pain of yet another breakup in what seems to be a string of ill-fated matches. He turns for solace to the stars, poring over his astrological chart to find his place in the cosmos.

The answer is totally unpredictable, and so unexpected and disarming that it can't be spoiled here. The play runs for 85 minutes with no intermission, and no late or return seating. No matter; you'll be riveted to your seat, anxious to find out what happens next.

In the central role of Nate, the always delightful Pierce once again proves his deft stage chops he tears down the fourth wall by addressing the audience directly, as though we're a bystander to the action of his life. When his friend Curtis comes by, they're still sort of addressing the crowd, especially during their running commentary on the hotness of random passers-by.

Sometimes, recorded commentary comes to us from Nate, via his internal monologue. It's here that some of the most poignant, heart-wrenching parts of the play unfold; parts that will make you think about your own life and your own role in the universe.

Huge props go to scenic design for Laura Jellinek. The primary set for most of the first part of the action portrays a typical, small New York City living room, with a table serving as a desk at the end of the room. But in the second portion of the play, hydraulics tip the stage back on its rear to turn it into another room. That set folds into itself later, to reveal a third section.

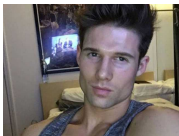
Also worthy of mention is sound designer Mikhail Fiksel, who brings the thriving street scene of New York City to life in a delightful cacophony that adds dimension to Bock's story.

Tickets are already scarce for this short but impactful play. Catch it now, before it closes. As the adage goes, "life is short; live passionately."

"A Life" runs through Dec. 4 at Playwrights Horizons' Peter Jay Sharp Theater, 416 W. 42nd St. For information or tickets, call 844-483-9008 or visit www.phnyc.org

Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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